

Humane Systems for Early Childhood

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

- ❑ More than 4000 children were victims of abuse and neglect; even more witnessed domestic violence;
- ❑ Rigid funding streams encourage territorialism and narrow the scopes of service delivery to children and their families;
- ❑ Insufficient oral and mental health providers for children drains our social and economic capital;
- ❑ The importance of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development is not incorporated as a standard in state policy;
- ❑ Inadequate investment in early childhood prevention, intervention and celebration leads to higher rates of long-term expenditures;
- ❑ Communication gaps across state agencies, community organizations and families leads to duplication and thwarts family access to needed resources;
- ❑ Families are not effectively supported and encouraged to be active participants in their children's development;
- ❑ A dearth of quality child care is affecting children's readiness for school, families' ability to work productively, and the state's economic development goals;



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Program Vision:

All children in Maine live, grow, and learn in a safe, nurturing and healthy environment in order to reach their highest potentials.

Program Mission:

Our mission is to create and sustain a unified, statewide early childhood service system that provides essential resources, shares common standards for quality, and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Maine's children and their families. With this system in place, we envision that families will assume responsibility to nurture, protect, and encourage the cognitive, emotional, ethical and physical development of their children. As well, Maine communities will assume responsibility to strengthen families and foster the healthy development of children.

Program Goals:

- ❑ Uniting, simplifying and humanizing the systems and policies affecting children and families;
- ❑ Supporting, strengthening, and integrating primary prevention efforts ;
- ❑ Integrating mental health and physical health with social services;
- ❑ Recognizing the value and importance of population-based public health efforts in making Maine people healthier and in reducing health-care costs;
- ❑ Changing how we think about the public health of children so that it embraces the physical, social, emotional, mental, spiritual, and environmental contexts of their lives;
- ❑ Developing clear and simple language that will strengthen the communication that is vital to the system changes that we seek.

Program Activities:

- ❑ Staffing and guiding the Governor's Children's Cabinet's Task Force on Early Childhood to live its vision and mission, working collaboratively, communicating across sectors, providing research-based suggestions for infrastructure and policy, and implementing its plan in a family-centered, passionate, committed and thoughtful way;
- ❑ Restoring the public trust in its communities, public health and state government;
- ❑ Modeling and engaging in dialogues and activities that are culturally and linguistically competent;
- ❑ Partnering with primary health care providers and their representative associations, supporting young children and their families in reaching developmentally appropriate milestones and in ensuring access to medical and dental homes.

Funding Source:

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Budget: \$120,000 (FY 2006)

Staff Count: 1